

Amendment to the Specification

Please replace paragraphs [0015] and [0016] with the replacement paragraphs below:

31 [0015] The present invention permits rules to be stored within a rulebase 108 that are not currently effective. ~~In effect, the~~ The present invention provides a mechanism for associating a valid start date and stop date for the effectiveness of each rule within a rulebase 108 such that the rule is only employed by the rule server 104 if the date to employ the rule is any date between the start date and the stop date, i.e. when the rule
10 is currently effective.

31 [0016] The functional steps performed by embodiments of the invention will now be explained with reference to Fig. 2, which is a flow-chart illustrating the functional steps of an embodiment of the invention. Initially, according to embodiments of the invention, an administrator of the rule server 104 associates a start time and an end time with one or more rules 205 within the rulebase 108. A start time is the moment in time when the particular rule becomes effective, and the end time is the moment in time when the particular rule is no longer effective. The term "effective" in this context means that the particular rule will be applied by the rule engine 106 ~~at that particular moment in time~~.
20 In other words, when a transaction request is received by a rule server 104, only effective rules ~~in effect, referred to herein interchangeably as effective rules~~, contained within the rulebase 108 will be employed by the rule server 104. The administrator may associate a start time and an end time with each rule through a variety of well established means of applying input to a rule server 104. In an embodiment of the

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Contd. invention, the administrator associates a start time and an end time through a graphical user interface, such as the one illustrated in Fig. 4A.